Trans-Lake Washington Project
Washington State Department of Transportation
Sound Transit

Public Input For Weeks of April 28 to May 11, 2001

Date of Comment: April 28, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, alternatives, HCT, transit, and tunnel.

Comment: With the object in my estimation to get drivers out of their cars the HCT alternative is the best way to accomplish this goal. Carry this idea further and make it HHCT (High-speed High Capacity Transit). Any one of us would trade gridlock on SR 520 or I-90 for a seat on an elevated monorail and the morning paper gliding over traffic at 60 mph non stop. How about a loop from Redmond/Bellevue405/SeattlePine Street/ I-90EastGate/Issaquah? I would pay $12-$15 daily for a round trip ticket, leave my car at home and take a Mini Metro neighborhood bus to my nearest freeway terminal every work day. We have the funding if we redirect funds from the financial morass the proposed tunnel under Capital Hill and Portage Bay would cause with little resolution of our traffic problem.
Just imagine..

Date of Comment: April 30, 2001

Subjects: Public involvement and project.

Comment: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/translake/calendar.htm list public meetings. However, every event listed on it has already occurred, and no new events are listed. Please update the list. Thanks.

Date of Comment: May 1, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, alternatives, interchange, and mitigations/enhancements.

Comment: Dear Public Representative,
We are members of the Eastlake community and are writing to express our opposition to the consideration of expanding the SR-520/I-5 Interchange that would extend further into the Eastlake neighborhood. This proposed interchange would extend into the heart of our neighborhood and make the congestion, pollution and noise of the freeway traffic even more imposing on our neighborhood and homes. We chose to live in an urban neighborhood but want to preserve every bit of the green spaces, parks, parking and homes that this area has to offer. We enjoy walking through our neighborhood in the evenings and weekends and enjoy the sense of peace, albeit small sense of peace, that exists here. I understand the pressure and need to keep expanding the transportation system as we use and benefit from it also. However, there have got to be other viable options that will accomplish the purpose without destroying what is left of a shrinking Eastlake. Thank you for listening to our concerns.
Sincerely, [signature]

Date of Comment: May 6, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, alternatives, ferries, and transit.

Comment: [Response was sent.]
I would like to come to the advisory meeting, as an interested citizen, but I can't get across the bridge in time!! (I know, not very funny..)I have been wondering about the use of ferries across the lake. I heard that it was being considered, but I don't see it in the alternatives. Something like one going to Leschi with good connector buses to downtown, and one to the U. District, with good buses going to the hubs in the upper neighborhoods. Buses could run special trips just to the ferry from the designated park and rides. I' thinking of zippy little passenger onlys. Thanks for the update.

Date of Comment: May 6, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, alternatives, HCT, transit, and tunnel.

Comment: [Response was sent.]
With the object in my estimation to get drivers out of their cars the HCT alternative is the best way to accomplish this goal. Carry this idea further and make it HHCT (High-speed High Capacity Transit). Any one of us would trade gridlock on SR520 or I90 for a seat on an elevated monorail and the morning paper gliding over traffic at 60mph non stop. How about a loop from Redmond/Bellevue405/SeattlePine Street/I90EastGate/Issaquah? I would pay $12-$15 daily for a round trip ticket, leave my car at home and take a Mini Metro neighborhood bus to my nearest freeway terminal every work day. We have the funding if we redirect funds from the financial morass the proposed tunnel under Capital Hill and Portage Bay would cause with little resolution of our traffic problem. Just imagine..

Date of Comment: May 6, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, HCT, transit, HOV lane/s, and early action.

Comment: Dear Mr. Fellows
Thank you for your communication. Taking your points out of order:
2. The Bus Rapid Transit concept vs. Rail
While I wouldn't argue that bus service per se is "directly analogous to high capacity transit service," I would argue that, in the guise of bus-rapid-transit, it **can** be such. Actually consultants of Sound Transit have recently presented exactly this case. I was very impressed with this presentation. [http://www.soundtransit.org/BusForum/Cover.htm]

1. Capacity of Bus-Only vs. HOV lanes
My point was somewhat different than that "a bus-only lane will have a similar capacity as rail past a given point in a corridor." What I said was that "buses on HOV have far **more** capacity than rail" assuming that loading and unloading is conducted off-line (and that one "raises the bar" high enough (eg HOV3) to keep them in free flow). The calculations supporting this contention are at the end of my initial email below. Of course it is true, as you state, that there are congested activity centers such as downtown Seattle which impede bus flow. That was the reason for the bus tunnel (albeit, by contemporary bus-rapid-transit standards it should have 4 lanes at the stations rather than 3). If buses are to perform well, similar, if less extensive and expensive accommodations would need to be constructed for other congested centers such as the U-District and Northgate. -- I agree that "a separate bus-only lane would not add incremental

value over a shared HOV lane" on SR 520, the reason being that, properly administered, HOV lanes have more (bus) transit capacity than we are ever likely to need.

3. Definition of the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Alternative
I understand now, as I did not at the time of my 3/6 e-mail to Mr. McCormick, that the provision of rail HCT via SR 520 would entail a new tunnel or at least rail route to downtown Seattle. I assume this pretty much dictates that I-90 will become the preferred option for cross-lake HCT, at least if cross-lake HTC is rail (which I believe would be a grave mistake). Incidentally rail on I-90 would presumably dictate that the planned HOV lanes be added to the outside, GP lanes, which would appear to deviate from FHWA / WSDOT design standards.

4. 2-way Operation of the I-5 Express Lanes as an "Early Action"
I am interested in this study for a number of reasons. Assuming HOV lanes are added to SR 520, they obviously need somewhere to go once they reach the west side of the lake. If a full-time, bus-only, southbound lane was to be constructed on the I-5 express lanes, that would at least handle the buses, if not the carpools. Alternately if the express lanes were to be converted to a 2x2 couplet (1 HOV and 1 GP each direction), that would be even more advantageous. I assume that this would entail tunneling at the downtown end, tunneling and/or over-head structures north of Lake City Way, some kind of "heroic" measure at NE 42nd where the express lanes go from 4 to 3 lanes and are pinched by bridge supports, and a difficult HOV interchange (an under-ground round-about?) at the SR 520 / I-5 intersection. I also assume that while we are presumably talking hundreds of millions of dollars for these measures, that they can be accomplished at **some** price (and in all likelihood for a fraction of the planned LRT line). I realize that there is "no proposal on the table that would provide for reverse-peak-direction transit reliability across the Ship Canal other than for the Link light rail project." In fact I think that is the essential issue since the solution of this problem would allow HOV bus-rapid-transit to be put in place on this stretch of highway, across the lake, and indeed through-out the metropolitan region. I am convinced this could be accomplished if these issues are all attacked together.

I thank you in advance for the above study or its summary, which I don't seem to have received from Mr. McCormick yet.

I would also appreciate it if there is a way to incorporate these remarks into the deliberations of the cross-lake committee.

[Attached Rob Fellow's e-mail response on March 20, 2001, comment from March 6, 2001-already processed, and Dave McCormick e-mail response to questions]

[Previous request below]

Trans-Lake Washington Project

Reference: Early Actions Progress Report -- March 10, 2001

I-5 Actions

WSDOT should study converting I-5 Express lanes to become two-way transit or transit/HOV lanes during current open hours (barrier separated).

No early action possible. Conversion was studied by WSDOT in 1994, and was not recommended due to high construction costs and operations and maintenance costs. Would it be possible for me to get a hold of the study coming to this conclusion. Thanks

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Date of Comment: April 25, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, general purpose lane/s, and project.

Comment: Dated: April 22, 2001
To: Trans-Lake Washington Project
Executive Committee

Re: Seismic Risk/Vulnerability of SR-520 Corridor

Currently the Trans-Lake Washington Project has identified eight SR-520 corridor alternatives for consideration. We know, according to WSDOT, the current SR-520 elevated roadway and bridge are vulnerable to seismic risk. Recent studies, and the February 2001Nisqually 6.8 Richter-scale earthquake, raise issues of previously unknown nearby geologic faults to adding high-cost capacity to an already seismically vulnerable area – what is the risk?

Recommendation:
1. Before selecting any SR-520 corridor alternative, assess the risk probability of a major earthquake event.
2. Conduct appropriate seismic analyses of the Westside (Seattle) approaches to the current bridge and proposed alternatives. The west bridge approaches are very close to well-documented newly pinpointed seismic-risk areas in Seattle.
3. Review recent Seattle and San Francisco Earthquake Conference proceedings: ("Nisqually Quake was Dream to Scientists" by Eric Sorensen, Seattle Times, 4-21-01.)

References:
1. "Finding Where all the Faults Lie", by Tom Paulson, Seattle P-I, April 2001.
2. The Toppled Chimney Mystery: Is it the Fault's Fault?". The NY Times, March 27, 2001.
3. "Ominous Findings in Seattle Quake", The NY Times, Jan 23, 2001.
4. "A Line on the Seattle Fault", by Mark A. Waligole, Seattle P-I, Dec 1, 2000.
5. Channel 5/NWNC – Glenn Farley – TV segment March 26, 2000 Kingdome Implosion, Dec 3, 2000.
6. "Evidence of Quake Rupture Found," by Arlene Brandt, Seattle Times, Nov 30, 2000.
7. Earthquake Scientist Meeting at University of Washington, sponsored by U.S. Geological Survey, Seattle, WA, Nov 29, 2000.
8. Seattle Kingdome implosion, March 25, 2000 (200 seismometers throughout Seattle)

[name]
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T.R.U.S.T.

[attachment]

RESOLUTION 00-02

25 April 2001

T.R.U.S.T., a regionally-based organization, has focused on transportation issues and participated in the recently concluded Trans-Lake Study Group. Our Dissenting Opinion regarding the resulting findings and recommendations cost us membership in the current SR-520 "scoping" portion of the EIS process, along with other dissenting organizations. Once again we wish to put forward the merits of a North Crossing.

- The North Crossing, Sand Point to Kirkland, must be reconsidered in order to meet the legally required study of alternatives in the EIS process.
- Trans-Lake and WSDOT's own O/D study completed in May 1999 clearly showed the greatest demand coming from northeast of the current bridge and going to the southwest of the bridge.
- Only this North Crossing adds significantly to the capacity of our region's infrastructure as calculated by Parametrics Inc.
- Additional regional capacity makes this bridge cost effective and to date WSDOT has not made detailed calculations on land acquisition along the proposed routes on both sides of the lake.
- Plausible connections at both ends are available vs. none in Seattle for SR-520.
- Because the public would have a choice, this bridge would be an acceptable candidate for tolling.
- Failure to properly address the North Crossing in the EIS will only serve as yet another point for judicial review in the future.

We can only hope that the Chairman of the Executive Committee and WTC member will be able to look beyond WSDOT's financial needs, Mercer Island's private lanes and work toward Regional increases in infrastructure through the addition of GP lanes.

Date of Comment: May 6, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, transit, HCT, and project.

Comment: [Response was sent.]
Oh, one more question: what assumptions did you make about highway construction? It seems that the transit mode split could be quite different depending on the number of GP lanes crossing the bridge and the resulting congestion.
[previous e-mail]

[name],
Thanks for your responses. Some further questions:

1) What assumptions did you make as to how people would reach transit stops? For people using buses to reach transit stops, did you assume that buses follow their current routes, or did you consider the effects of more frequent feeder service?

2) While the assumptions about station spacing and travel times are not strictly "technology specific" in that they would apply equally to conventional light rail or a Bombardier monorail, they do assume large vehicles (presumably at 5-10 minute headways?) stopping on-line at every station.

I presume that in preparing the ridership estimates you prepare a file for the computer with station locations and travel times between those locations, or something of that sort, and a computer program generates ridership estimates from that data? If that is the case, I would be very interested to see, or perhaps help prepare, the ridership numbers that a AGT/PRT system which allowed more closely spaced stations, perhaps distributed at half-mile intervals over a grid rather than along a single line, and also provided non-stop service from origin to destination at a speed of 30-60 mph. My belief is that a system of this sort, if one can be put into operation, might potentially attract far greater ridership than a conventional transit system. Several such systems are being investigated as part of the ATT study and are thought to be potentially available within the 5-20 year planning timeline of the Trans-Lake project. I don't want to generate a huge additional amount of work for you; I would hope that I could give you some basic guidelines for approximately how such a system might be laid out and what the station-station travel times might be, and that that would be enough to get a quick sense of what ridership might be possible.

If there's something fundamental about your forecasting software, which makes this idea difficult or impossible, I'd appreciate hearing what that might be.

Thanks for your time,

[Signature]

Date of Comment: May 7, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, alternatives, entrance lane/s, lid/s, and mitigations/enhancements.

Comment: I have been sent in snail mail the drawings for Montlake Boulevard (M1, M2, M3, and M4) dated from February. I'd be interested in any new ones or updated ones if you have them. Also, since I live on the 2000 block of E. Roanoke I have some obvious concerns about noise, because the designs for M1, M3, and M4 all have the on ramp for eastbound 520 and the eastbound off ramp for Montlake Boulevard in my backyard where currently it's noisy enough with the on/off ramps a block away at Montlake Boulevard and Lake Washington Boulevard.

I'm all in favor of improving the mobility on SR 520 and Montlake Boulevard, but 3 of the 4 drawings make that happen at E. Roanoke's expense. Having the ramps right below my house isn't creating "'win-win' solutions for addressing regional mobility and community livability issues", as Jeff Peacock put it when he addressed the Montlake Community Club. I'd rather have the 8 lanes in my back yard than the on/off ramps on E. Roanoke with dozens of cars idling at the stop light, half of them UW students blaring their sub-woofer stereos rattling my house, and the other half trucks using their compression brakes also rattling my house. All of the effort and money that I'm spending on better windows and insulation to quiet my house from the relatively minor amount of arterial traffic on E. Roanoke as well as from the nearby Montlake Boulevard will have been for not.

I'm skeptical about the sound barriers being that effective in my case unless they are as tall as the 25' - 30" tall ones on SR 520 near near the I-405 exchange or the ones on SR 520 near Marymoor

Park where they are as tall as the eaves on the adjacent houses. But even so, I'd almost opt for being displaced. I've shown the designs to all of my neighbors and having the on/off ramps on E. Roanoke is not going over well at all. And the lid? It seems a very expensive undertaking to benefit maybe a dozen houses on Lake Washington Boulevard by reducing the background noise of SR 520. Maybe there's a pseudo lid that doesn't span SR 520, but where the on/off ramps in the Montlake area are mostly covered until they reach Montlake Boulevard and there's an island in the middle of SR 520 for the BRT. Or the eastbound on ramp could still be on E. Roanoke as in M1, M3, and M4 but from Montlake Boulevard it starts to immediately descend as it curves around and the eastbound off ramp comes over it to meet Montlake where it currently does at Lake Washington Boulevard. I know this would add another traffic light, however, but I'm desperate to find a win-win solution for E. Roanoke.

Actually, my vote goes to the M2-Montlake Boulevard design. It seems to do the most as far as improving mobility on SR 520 as well as on Montlake Boulevard while at the same time having the least amount of livability issues with all of the different neighborhoods in Montlake that I can tell from the preliminary drawings that I have.

I realize people have to make sacrifices for the better of the whole on this issue, but no where along the whole of SR 520 do I see anyone who would be affected more than me and my neighbors with dozens of idling, accelerating, and deccelerating cars and trucks constantly at our doorsteps, less than 20' away. If you could forward my concerns to the powers that be, or tell me who I should specifically direct my comments and questions towards it would be greatly appreciated.
Thanks.

Date of Comment: May 7, 2001

Subjects: Public involvement and project.

Comment: Dates for your committee meetings are out of date. April 26th is the date of this call – please update that.

Date of Comment: May 7, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives and mitigations/enhancements.

Comment: [Response sent with drawings].
He is already on the mailing list. He saw an Eastside Journal or press release on the Trans-Lake Project. He is interested in the alternatives that would affect the Montlake area. He would like to see the latest alternatives and designs. This would help for planning purposes.

Date of Comment: May 9, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, HCT, HOV lane/s, and I-90.

Comment: First choice: #2 SR 520 Safety and Preservation, I-90 LRT based on research that there are over 1000 incidents of traffic stops (break downs, accidents) on SR 520 Bridge due to no shoulder.

Second choice: #7 SR 520 HOV/BRT – based on need to add carpool if LRT not added to I-90—absolutely oppose LRT on 520 and oppose more than three lanes per side on SR 520.
* Lived in San Francisco, CA- commuted to Main [Gurtz] – drove Golden Gate Bridge DAILY!

Date of Comment: May 9, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, HOV lane/s, toll/taxes, tunnel, I-90, and project.

Comment: #1 Peak periods, make SR 520 car-pool only (Wash. DC does this)
#2 Have Bill Gates pay for a 520 replacement, his workers cause the problem, he has the money.
#3 Make it a toll road. $20/per trip, one-way (you'll raise money quickly). Most employees can afford it!
#4 Put it all underground subways! Plus, put the viaduct underground (how did Boston get the $18 billion for their pork barrel?)
#5 Pay off the U.S. debt. $200 B/yr. Just for interest! What a waste! Use dollars for public good.
#6 Destroy SR 520 and I-90. We don't need to cross the lake. We stay here, they stay there!
#7 Fill in the lake! That's what Thompson wanted to do with Lake Union in 1920! (Get soil from Mt. Rainier!)
Good luck! Whatever you do, those rich people in Montlake will scream!
Note! *This idea is no more stupid than his Denny Regrade!*

Date of Comment: May 9, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, mitigations/enhancements, transit, HOV lane/s, HCT, and right-of-way.

Comment: I reviewed several of the proposals and am unclear on something. It seems that the busses and light rail solutions are being kept separate. I've noticed the rails imbedded in the tunnel downtown. I am curious if some consideration has been given to allowing light rail to share the same right of way with buses on a solution on SR 520? Surely drivers could be trained to follow necessary signaling? This might permit busses to more efficiently by avoiding backups from mainline accidents that block the HOV lanes. It also might enable better service to areas on the east side such as out on Avondale or into less dense areas of North Bellevue that do not yet warrant a light rail system.

I'd be curious to know if there are engineering reasons, such as stress placed upon the road bed/or surface that would prohibit this.

Best of luck. I would someday love to be able to live in Seattle and enjoy its more vibrant culture while working in the hi-tech industry on the Eastside, but currently I cannot realistically do that.
